

Testimony of Sharon Aks

AN ACT INCREASING PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS IN CROSSWALKS AND FAILURE TO EXERCISE DUE CARE TO AVOID HITTING A PEDESTRIAN OR CYCLIST.

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Sharon Aks. I am a small business owner with an accounting practice located on High Ridge Road and also a resident of Stamford for over 27 years.

I am here today because I have become a Stamford statistic as a pedestrian being struck in a crosswalk by failure of an individual to yield and exercise due caution. One statistic I never thought I would be.

On January 21, 2016, my colleague Bruce Goldstein and I did everything right. We crossed High Ridge Road after pushing and waiting for the walk signal. In spite of doing everything right, we were struck by the operator of an Audi vehicle who did not take due caution in operating their vehicle and failed to yield to us with in the crosswalk. The incident occurred midafternoon on a Thursday. The weather was clear. While I have no memory of the incident, it is my understanding from the records that I was thrown 6-8 feet in the air and Bruce was also struck by the same vehicle. We both sustained multiple significant injuries as a result of being struck. Bruce is unable to attend today as he still has limited mobility.

My understanding is that the driver of the vehicle was trying to cut off another vehicle that had yielded to us and may also have been a distracted driver. Both drivers had a green light at the same time we had a walk signal.

I believe that the changes in this act are the first steps toward changes needed to prevent the increasing number of pedestrians being struck in the city and hopefully avoid potential future fatalities. In addition, I would like to see all traffic having a red light while pedestrians receive a walk signal and of course increased monitoring and penalties for distracted driving.